

Douglas

ΚΑΠΠΑ ΛΑΜΒΔΑ.

Some Account of a Secret Society in New-York,
entitled the "Kappa-Lambda."

IN

A Letter

TO



Alexander H. Stevens, M. D., LL. D.

BY

A Retiring Physician.

Shol to Dhu Glas.

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Douglas, Sholto.

Kappa Lambda.
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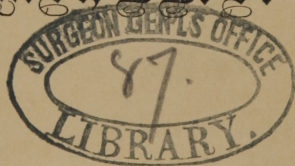
Alexander H. Stevens, M.D., LL.D.

BY

A Retired Physician.

Sholto to Douglas.

[New York, 1859]



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by SHELTON DOUGLAS, M. D., in the Clerk's Office
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THE LETTER.

Dr. Stevens:

Sir:

I am a physician, now (and for many years) a resident of New-York, and am at this time in a position "homologous," if not in all respects similar, to your own. I hope you will excuse this intrusion upon your "dignified retirement," BECAUSE I am a physician, gladly self-withdrawn from the laborious and ill-compensated practice of medicine, after more than twenty-four years experience of it, and no longer dependent on that business or any connected with it. You and I need no nods or winks, no hailing-signs, or grips or secret passwords, to indicate, each to the other, that we are members together of one and the same great order,—of an institu=

tion established by the Creator of Men, the Great Physician, at the first moment when men found themselves mortal, and subject to "the thousand ills that flesh is heir to," the innumerable perils and painful casualties which are "the common lot" of mortality.

Old as I am, Sir, you are still so much my senior, that I may properly regard and address you as my "Elder Brother" in that noble and sacred, though not secret fraternity; and I might, perhaps, justly style you a Father or even Patriarch in it,—so long have you been esteemed one of the Princes and Proceres of the medical profession here. The impressions left on my mind by not less than thirty years of study and practice are fruitful to me in testimonials of your deserved eminence; and I may therefore be excused for congratulating the world that such a man—one who has made many live who would not have lived but for his interference,—yet lives to receive, and, I hope, to appreciate, this small tribute from a humble member of "the Ancient and

Honorable'' and ''Independent Order'' of Physicians,
—an Order older than that of the ''Kappa=Lambda.''

A certain yellow-covered pamphlet has lately been put into my hands by a New-York physician of great learning and distinction,—one perhaps as widely known as you, and likely to be as long known. So you would confess,—and so would the public declare, if I should name him and state his titles to fame. At his suggestion, and at the request of several other physicians, I have perused that pamphlet; and I now proceed to give you the results of that perusal in the form of a free commentary on the statements contained in it. I append that document entire, so that all who read this letter may have the whole evidence before them.

I write without any personal interest or feeling of injury in the matter, having never (so far as I know) been ''subjected to any damage, loss, let, hindrance or molestation whatever'' from that very extraordinary combination of human beings rejoicing in the name, style,

and title of the "Kappa-Lambda Association." I have no more pecuniary interest in this affair than you—possibly not as much. But I am in the simple, just exercise of the natural right not merely of a physician but of an educated citizen; and, in a high moral sense, it might be said that this effort is indeed but the performance of a duty,—if there be a necessity for the exposure and public condemnation (thereby) of an evil affecting the community.

This yellow-covered pamphlet is entitled a "Report of the Committee of the Medical Society of the City and County of New-York, appointed to investigate the subject of a Secret Medical Association." It is dated 1834; and you know that it has been in print during the twenty-eight years indicated by that date. It contains allegations concerning you and others, which, having never been denied or even answered by you or any one else, may now be "taken as confessed"—to use a lawyer's phrase. In my comments upon this Report,

I have, therefore, a right to treat its statements as **FACTS**, undisputed and indisputable by you. If they were signed by your own name, or endorsed "good" in your own handwriting, they would have no higher evidence of their authenticity and truth than they now bear.

The Association self-entitled Kappa-Lambda, appears (from this Report) to be a secret society, formed forty years ago by some physicians of this city, not for purposes of mutual improvement in the science, art and practice of Medicine,—but with the (not undisguised) sole object of promoting the pecuniary interests of its members by depreciating the reputations of others acknowledged by them to be worthy, capable, learned and eminent as well as "regular" Doctors of Medicine,—recognized personally by them as professional brethren, and in daily intercourse greeted as personal friends. It was then, and is, to this degree, a "Mutual Aid Association," and a "Mutual Admiration Society." It was, moreover, in its inception, has constantly been and is now

in its operation, a "private conspiracy," an organized clique, a "moccason-footed caucus," a subterranean convention of "sly, grimalkin-faced, cat-paced gentry," for the purpose of systematic detraction, not (perhaps) of actual slander and calumny. It was and is "une ligue, une coalition de ceux qui veulent enjouir toutes les honneurs sans les avoir mérités, envahir tous les offices sans être en état de les remplir."—"A league, a coalition of those who wish to enjoy all the honors without having merited them, to put themselves in possession of all the offices without being in condition to fulfil their duties."

That peculiar unwritten system of Ethics which governs all "regular" members of the medical profession, and to which all true physicians are amenable, stamps with condemnation certain courses of conduct sometimes adopted by professing "medical men" with a view to get practice. For instance,—ADVERTISING, in any sense, or in any mode, direct or indirect, is held and denounced as "irregular," unbecoming a physician, and, by the

common consent and common law of the profession, puts the person guilty of it to the BAN of the profession. Any public notification of his desire to receive or attend patients, except by an ordinary small sign or door-plate on his house and office, deprives him of the right to be recognized as a member of a gentlemanly and liberal profession, in contradistinction from commercial business, the mercenary arts and servile occupations. In the same spirit is conceived the rule which inhibits a physician from attempting to secure to himself the patients of a professional brother, from visiting them professionally and prescribing for them without his knowledge or consent, and from undertaking their treatment, until the physician who was first called (and had charge of the case, with the moral and legal responsibility for it), has been regularly discharged from the medical management of it, —except, of course, in cases of near relationship. These and other ethical rules of immemorial date constitute the lines which impassably separate true physicians from quacks.

Learned Sir, there are many of your professional brethren, here and elsewhere, who would be very much gratified and edified by a deliberate statement of your opinions on the points in which certain contrivances and practices of the Kappa-Lambda appear to conflict with the spirit and principles, if not with the already expressed rules, of this system of unwritten law for the government of physicians, in their personal relations to each other, as members of one profession. Can it be pretended that a man may properly and rightfully do, in secret combination with others, what is acknowledged and condemned as morally wrong if done or attempted by one, alone and unaided? That the mere fact of CONSPIRING to effect a purpose changes its quality from wrong to right, is an opinion which I will not now venture to impute to you. Read the "Revised Statutes of New-York," under the phrase "Conspiracy;" and see how that illustrates this point. To save you the trouble of looking it up by the Index, I will give you chapter and verse. (II.)

The Association in this city which assumes and boasts the mystic title expressed in these two letters of the Greek alphabet, is a secret combination, league, conspiracy, or caucus of persons regularly admitted into the medical profession, bearing the title of M. D., who have banded themselves together not merely for mutual aid and benefit, but evidently for the purpose of depressing and injuring other regular members of the same profession, always acknowledged by them to be of equal standing and qualifications with themselves,—some of them indeed, unquestionably, of far higher merit and reputation than any of the Kappa-Lambda club, or those affiliated with them, living or dead, excepting yourself and a few others.

This secret organization is not a thing of to-day or of yesterday merely, although at this moment active in the malignant mischief which was the first purpose of its existence. Excuse this term: I quote from a very respectable authority, when I say "Its name is mechant malhecho; and it means mischief." More than a gene=

ration has passed since its formation. The legally constituted body of the regular physicians of this city, and the only association authorized to speak for them in 1834, investigated and published the details of this permanent plot, and, I will say, this organized system of fraternal slander and detraction. By comparing that report with the present actual operations and known principles of this secret society, you will be enabled to judge how serious and how criminal, not to say formidable, is this dark conspiracy against the interests of the community, and indeed of humanity, as well as against the dignity and independence of the medical profession and the rights of all its honorable, sincere and faithful members.

When I tell the world that this combination has been working for more than forty years, and is, still, with untiring and undiminished force, operating to depreciate the merit and impair the professional business and income of VALENTINE MOTT, JOHN W. FRANCIS and some of the most worthy and eminent of their compeers, as it did

against DAVID HOSACK, WRIGHT POST, and SAM'L L. MITCHILL, during their lifetime, they will naturally wish to see the proofs and illustrations of this assertion, or the authorities for it. I therefore append them in the document to which I have just referred as containing them.

The public will also feel and naturally express some surprise that the Kappa-Lambda-men have so ill succeeded in depreciating the reputations of the justly eminent physicians here named and elevating their own. I need not ask you how the names of Hosack and Mitchell, and Wright Post stand now in the history of Medicine and Surgery; for, in the history of New-York, "THEY STILL LIVE."

The public will or may be also surprised in this retrospective glance at the works of the Kappa-Lambda, to notice how little that association has contributed to the advancement of that science, the (professed) knowledge of which furnishes its members with the means of advancing their own personal interests,—of "obtaining a

liveliness,"—of "providing for their families," and (in a very few strongly marked instances) with the means of accumulating wealth, or (in ordinary commercial language) with the means of "making a fortune."

Inform me, Dr. Stevens, if you can, what improvements in the science and practice of Medicine have been introduced by the agency or intervention of the Kappa-Lambda, during the last forty years? Within that period, our noble art has made such advances as I may be excused for barely hinting to YOU, but which it is not only proper, but highly important to mention for the information of the Kappa-Lambda-men generally.

The *Materia Medica*, for instance, has been enlarged, during that period, by numerous contributions from American physicians. New remedies have been introduced by them, and have been stamped "official," by the highest medical authority in the world, remedies that are likely to remain in the *Pharmacopoeias* and *Dispensatories* as long as any that were known to

Celsus or Dioscorides. Has one of them been discovered or even suggested by a member of the Kappa-Lambda?

(Will you make one exception in favor of Lupuline? If so, I refer you to one of the notes which I annex to this epistle.) I.

The science of Chemistry has been almost re-constructed since 1819, in some of its departments, especially in the Organic, the Analytical and the Pharmaceutic,—in short,—those branches which are most nearly related to our art, or (I may say) included in the great comprehensive Science of Medicine. In what way—in what degree—has any Kappa-Lambda man contributed to this progress,—to these inventions and improvements? Other physicians have borne a memorable part in these discoveries. The SPERMEDIA clavus and another reliable partus accelerator might be named as instances of this. But was Stearns or any discoverer in Pharmacology a member of your secret Association?

Anglo-America has given to the world the idea and the fact of Anæsthesia.

These two things would have been pronounced miracles by Cullen and Cheselden, by Baudelocque and Denman, if their discovery had been pre-announced to them in the form of prophecy, "when they were in the height of their vogue." I leave you to say what part the Kappa-Lambda men have had in these discoveries, or in the discussions which have grown out of the questions as to the origination of either of them.

From these and other sources, that peculiar science which mingles the duties of two of the three professions that deal with the wants and woes, the fears, the infirmities, the vices and crimes of mankind—has derived the means of an equal or proportional advance. What does Medical Jurisprudence owe to any member of any secret Association in the Universe?

In Surgery, whether operative or purely scientific,—in Anatomy—in any and all of this great group of

sciences, let me ask the Kappa=Lambda Association and their "AFFILIATED" second-cousins—DOES THE WORLD OWE YOU ANYTHING?

"Time would fail me to tell" the unsatisfied demands which Science, Humanity, Justice and Reason are now presenting to a society upon whose prolonged, associated experience and observation they have such mighty claims as they must have on yours. Space would fail me too, for this purpose; and it is meet that we should grow economical of both time and space, as age brings us swiftly near the shadowy and ever indeterminate "bourne" where they and we vanish into Eternity and Infinity.

Napoleon I, (whom I would call Napoleon the Great, if there were not a greater man of that name) was accustomed to ask (when any person was introduced to his notice for appointment to office, or for promotion or honor of any kind) *Qu'à't'il fait?* "What has he done?"

The "Napoleonian Ideas" are rapidly becoming prevalent in the world, at this peculiar conjuncture of events,—moral, political and—medical.

If we (that is, you and I) put this question and apply this test to or concerning the New-York Kappa-Lambda Association,—what would be the answer? What would be the "report?"

Not so loud as the report of a Fourth-of-July powder-cracker, when it "blows out" at the wrong end.

Now,—Learned and Venerable and Illustrious Father in Medicine (NON "PATER IN DEO," SED SODALITATE HIPPOCRATICA,) let me ask you "TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE?"

Everybody has a right to ask questions; and everybody has a right to answer them, or not, just as that particular body pleases.

But if you (or any person representing you or the Kappa-Lambda) should condescend to answer this query, that answer might contain a reminiscence or hint

that Judas Iscariot once asked the same question, when he had no right to ask it. But it seems to me that when we have a decision or (at least) a dictum of a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New-York, (in the City of New-York,) lately on the Bench of the Court of Appeals,—to the effect and purport, and indeed TOTIDEM VERBIS, that the highest authority recognized in that Court is SATAN,—it is hardly worth while to evade a convenient formula of expression merely because Judas Iscariot once employed it on an improper occasion, or with an improper meaning. [III.]

“TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE” by those who formed the Kappa-Lambda and by their successors and by those “AFFILIATED” with them or to them? To no other purpose than the absorption into their own little muddy Malstroem [IV] of nearly all Medical offices of honor and profit in the Hospitals and other charitable institutions belonging to this city,—and the augmentation of their individual receipts from private practice, by calling in

each other in consultation, and uniformly, systematically (though slyly and insidiously) objecting to the call of any physician not a member of their Mutual Aid Association, or Mutual Insurance and Assurance Company.

You may remember a passage in one of Pope's little poems, which will better express my meaning than anything which I can write of my own invention. In a letter to a friend a considerable time previous, Pope had said, "We have, it seems, a great Turk in poetry, who can never bear a brother on the throne; and has his mutes, too, a set of nodders, winkers and whisperers, whose business it is to strangle all other offspring of wit in their birth." These words furnish the key to the delicate satire of the following lines:

Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
 Bear, like the Turk, no brother near his throne,

* * * * *

Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
 And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer,
 Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,

Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike,
 Alike reserved to blame, or to commend—
 A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend.

* * * * *

Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
 Who would not weep, if ATTICUS were he?

“TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE?” Your Association Sir, was organized as I understand, (and as you admit by your silence respecting the pamphlet which I append to this letter,) for the purpose of demolishing the reputations of Wright Post, David Hosack, Samuel L. Mitchell, Valentine Mott, John Wakefield Francis and some others whom I might mention. Its more prominently expressed object was to elevate the characters of Alexander H. Stevens, Thomas Cock, John C. Cheeseman, Francis W. Johnson and some other persons whom I need not now mention, because if you and I know them, the WORLD DON'T KNOW THEM. And yet they went in with you into this CONSPIRACY, with the unconcealed intent to monopolize the medical practice of this City and the medical offices of this City for the benefit of themselves, and their sons, and their nephews

and their second and third cousins, and their sons-in-law to all succeeding generations. Now, Sir,—how has this twofold enterprise succeeded? What names in the history of medicine—what names of men coeval with Wright Post, David Hosack, Samuel L. Mitchill, Valentine Mott and John W. Francis can you cite to me as superior in their several departments of our Cyclopaedic profession of medicine, on this side of the "salt water?" In regard to some of these, I might ask—"Who have been their equals, among their competitors on either side of the water?" and I will leave the answer to be made (if you find it difficult) in London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna.

QUA—TIL FAIT? What has it DONE? What has the Kappa-Lambda accomplished? What kind of men has it brought up to fill the places of those whom I have mentioned? Is there one among the members of your Association and those AFFILIATED with it who can fill among the contributors to American Zoology

the place which Samuel L. Mitchill left vacant by his death?

The Kappa-Lambda Association has succeeded in driving out of this City (as many as they could of) the scientific physicians who have been invited into it to fill places, for which none were found competent here who would consent to take them. Among these, I will name Samuel H. Dickson, late of Charleston, and Samuel D. Gross, late of Louisville, both now of Philadelphia. I use these gentlemen's names without their knowledge, and, of course, without their consent. They will be astonished to find their names in this letter; but if they contradict me, I will prove them in the wrong (for once) and myself in the right.

The existence of secret societies among mankind is probably as old as the tower of Babel. There may have been some institutions of this character before that time; but, the date which I have given is sufficiently

far back for our present purpose. That men should thus combine is so natural that we might justly call it instinctive. Indeed, the history of secret societies includes almost the whole history of the world,—of the human race throughout all lands and over all seas,—through thousands of years.

I have studied this part of history for a long time, and have been at considerable pains and expense to collect rare books on the subject, which I have perused with a gratified curiosity. But, among all secret associations, ancient and modern, I can now find but three that had for their especial and express object the injury of others.

There have been and are purely benevolent institutions, which (very properly) make secrecy a condition of membership. I once belonged to such a society; and I do now. But I do not profess to be a Free-mason or an Odd-fellow; though you may say that I am a very odd fellow. I do not profess to belong to any society or any body.

For instance,—there is the Institution of Free-Masonry, (which may be considered the oldest extant organization of this kind,) having for its objects the benefit of its own members, charity to others, and evil to none. The same may be said of Odd-fellowship and other combinations of that class.

THE THREE EXCEPTIONS are—the order of the Hoöseynee, (the followers of the Moslem fanatic called by the Crusaders "the Old man of the Mountain,"') from which name is derived the modern word assassin,—the Phansygars of Hindustan, (sometimes called Thugs,—) and the Kappa-Lambda of New-York.

A beneficent Providence, over-ruling evil purposes for good, seems to have ordained that this evil-doing association shall die a natural death, "unscathed by the hand of violence," like the Templar in Scott's romance, who perished on the field, facing his antagonist, "with lance in rest" and with "charger at foamy speed," and

thus passed away, "a victim to the violence of his own contending evil passions." [V]

You, Sir, in the ordinary course of nature, will, before many years, retire from the scene of mortal action, "full of years and honors." Some of your coevals and associates in the profession here, who have exhibited a certain amount of talent in the disgraceful struggle of pseudo-medical intrigue and trickery, are fast dropping into ignoble graves, and their names fading into hopeless oblivion. The aspiring youths, the imaginary or assuming heirs, successors, representatives and assigns of the founders of the Kappa-Lambda, will be left without the least chance of rising so high out of the stagnant level of the obscurity on which they float, as to become, in this vast Metropolitan Community, even objects of public contempt. Let them feed like maggots on the decomposing carcass once animated by genius: the larvæ will never do more than rise on insect wing to buzz under the nose of an occasional patient—Uncle Toby.

As for the common herd, the profanum vulgus of middle-aged "respectable doctors" who constitute the present bulk of the Kappa-Lambda Society,—they may be quietly passed over as mere zeroes, or, what is less—negative quantities, in the scale of intellectual being. [VI]

Since the Kappa-Lambda Association was organized, Quackery has come in upon us like an overwhelming flood. Swain, Brandreth, Moffat, Townsend "and that ilk" have made their hundreds of thousands of dollars, and built their five and six story palaces (?) out of the stolid ignorance and silly credulity of the unprofessional mass of the people, by the efficient though negative aid of the dull routinists who here throng the "business walks" and rides of the regular profession. Quacks may be justly ranked among the yet numerous opprobria medicorum. What has the Kappa-Lambda Association done to prevent, hinder or remedy this murderous evil? I denounce its members as verily guilty in this matter.

You know how, during the last half-century, there has grown up, among the educated classes, a scepticism as to the general pretensions of regular physicians, and a disposition to patronize all forms of imposture and nonsense claiming the art of healing disease, relieving pain and prolonging life. Cancer-doctors, Homoeopaths, Hydropaths, Humbugoths, Clairvoyants, Animal Magnetists, (and very dirty animals they are, generally,) Spiritual-rappers, and an infinity of legal-medical and clerico-medical quackery have deluged us. Who opened the sluice-gates and let this freshet in upon us?

You may remember a passage in the excellent treatise of the eminent William Huxham, "On fevers," which illustrates these points in the blunt, honest style of that plain-spoken and practical, as well as learned man.

[VII] A re-reading of it will show you that New-York, in 1859, has made few advances beyond what London was in 1730, in that respect,—whereas, in London, there has been more than a century's moral progress and

public enlightenment on these subjects, correspondent with the experience of one hundred and twenty-nine years.

Sir Gilbert Blane, in his "Medical Logic," speaks impetively on the medical scepticism prevalent in his time; and his words are applicable here. [VIII]

Byron has unconsciously reproduced the same thought in poetic words.

—Physicians mend or end us;
Secundum artem.

But, it is in New-York, the Great Metropolis, the continental centre of wealth, power, art and literature,—that the Medical and Physical Arts and Sciences languish, while all others flourish in high renown.

Compare New-York with Philadelphia, in this point of view. Philadelphia has its five or six Medical Colleges, and its thousands of Medical students, every winter. I will make due allowance for the difference in the price of board, the cost of fuel, &c., between the two cities,—but, after making that allowance,—

there is a broad margin left for this question—"Why does Philadelphia take, not only the large majority of the students from all parts of the United States, but an immense and ponderous (I might say, imponderable and inestimable) majority of the talent and learning of our profession, employed in the business of medical instruction? WHY?

"Lest I be tedious unto thee" (as the lawyer said who was retained as counsel for the plaintiffs, in the celebrated case of "the Jews against the Apostle Paul,"

[IX] I will now and here close this "lengthy" epistle.

But, in closing, let me say, in all sincerity, and in simple truth, that (in my opinion) your great and justly venerated name has been foully misused in its connexion with the Kappa-Lambda.

That you could have purposed evil against your medical brethren, in thus associating yourself with these men, is, to me, incredible.

Then, come out from it; and BE DONE WITH IT!

I say—that the Kappa-Lambda Association, having accomplished no good, and having manifestly done much evil to Medicine, (in which one word are included both Science and Humanity) should be dissolved; and if I possessed dictatorial powers, I would say—"It shall be dissolved."—THAT is for you to say.

The silvery "blossoms of eternity" grow daily more numerous on my head, though they hang but thinly over my bare, bald brow. My only living hope is that when these snowdrops of the February of my life-year shall have fallen with me into the earth, they may be succeeded by brighter bloom and rich, abundant fruit,

—geseigt an einen andern flur,—

In einem andern sonnenlichte,—

In einem glücklichern natur.

"ripened on another soil, in another sunshine, in a fairer world,"—where those who here have "sown in tears shall reap in joy."

You and I are near the termination of our earthly

career. "When we come to die, (and long and late may that day come to you,) it is not the good things we have done for ourselves, but the good things we have done for others that we think of most pleasantly."

But it is time that this "lengthy" communication should cease,—as we all must soon cease from controversy and from labor here. Then, in conclusion, let me say—that I write in the interest of no clique or medical sect. As for any quarrel or jealousy between Kappa-Lambda-men and men of any other coterie, or institution whatsoever,—I say to all concerned—"A plague on both your houses!"

Yours, with much respect,

SHOLTO DOUGLAS, M.D.

To

ALEXANDER H. STEVENS, M.D. LL.D.

Shol to Dhu Glas!

See that dark grey man!

NOTES.

I have been careful to print the "Report" without omission, addition or alteration, excepting the correction of the punctuation, (which was disgracefully bad in both of the previous editions,) and the change of a very few words ungrammatically placed. I have therefore not struck out the respected name of John Torrey, who happened to be made an early member without any knowledge of the real objects of the Association, and without any interest in it, being totally unconnected with the practice of medicine, and having had nothing to do with the Kappa-Lambda since he was first drawn into it.

I. One of the original members of the Kappa-Lambda, Dr. Ansel W. Ives, gave to the yellow powder found upon the flowers of hops the name of Lupuline. It has been known to old women for ages, as containing all the powers of the hop-plant. Dr. A. W. Ives neither discovered it, nor contrived any process for producing it or separating it. All that is necessary is to shake the clusters of dried hops, when the powder drops off.

The name is an improper one. The article is not an alkaloid or proximate principle analogous to Quinine, Morphine, &c. If a better name than hop-powder were wanted, it might have been named Lupularium, in agreement with Lactucarium, Opium, &c.

II. Section 3.—If two or more persons shall conspire, either

1. To commit any offense; or,

2. * * * * *

3. * * * * *

4. * * * * *

5. To cheat and defraud any person of any property by any means which, if executed, would amount to a cheat,

6. To commit any act injurious to THE PUBLIC HEALTH, TO PUBLIC MORALS, or to trade or commerce, or for the perversion or obstruction of justice,

They shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.—*Revised Statutes III*, 972, 973.

III. This refers to an unlucky remark that slipped from Judge Roosevelt in sentencing an innocent man to be hanged a few months ago.—"We are told on the very highest authority—"All that a man hath he will give for his life," The passage is from the fourth verse of the second chapter of the Book of Job, which is as follows: "AND SATAN answered the Lord and said—Skin for skin: all that a man hath will he give for his life."

IV. I have taken pains to spell this word right. It is Norse and Norwegian, compounded of MAL, a mill-stone, and STROEM, a current or stream, meaning water whirling like a millstone,—in short, a WHIRLPOOL. The English and American geographers and lexicographers have always spelled it incorrectly, "Maelstrom."

V. I have not quoted Scott correctly, not having read the passages to which reference is here made, for many years.

"He descended into the lists, and commanded them to unhelm the conquered champion. His eyes were closed—the dark red flush was still on his brow. As they looked on him in astonishment, the eyes opened—but they were fixed and glazed. The flush passed from his brow, and gave way to the pallid hue of death. Unscathed by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions.

" 'This is indeed the judgment of God,' said the Grand Master, looking upwards—'Fiat voluntas tua.' "
—*Ivanhoe*, Chapter XLIII.

VI. A negative quantity is defined by an eminent algebraist as less than nothing. For instance, a person owing \$1,000 beyond his means to pay, is described as being worth \$1,000 less than nothing.

VII. A *lapsus memoriæ* caused me to mis-christen Huxham as William, instead of JOHN, his true prenomem. My own copy of his works having been left out of town on my last rural sojourn, I borrow from a friend.

"A diligent study of the ancients, therefore, and a thorough acquaintance with the Laws of the animal economy, as rationally delivered by the moderns, should be the business of every physician.—But some are more expeditiously popped into the world.—To be the favorite of a great man, (or, what is rather better, of a great woman,) to be the tool of a party, with a splendid equipage and no small share of assurance;—these are qualifications which finish the "doctor," to the reproach of the profession, and the danger of society.

* * * * *
"As for those who will neither read nor reason, but practice by rote, and prescribe at a venture,—I must seriously advise them, at least, to peruse the Sixth commandment." [Preface to Essay on Fevers.]

In speaking of "the boasted nostrums that are quacked upon the world by the great W—, or the meanest itinerant," he wisely adds—"The timid, low, insipid practice of some is almost as dangerous as the bold unwarranted empiricism of others. Time and opportunity, never to be regained, are often lost by the former,—while the latter,—by a bold push, send you off the stage in a moment." [Dissertation on Peripneumonies.]

In commenting on the errors of Asclepiades, he adds—"The novelty of the thing bore him out, as it frequently doth the *quacks* of the present time,—and ever will, whilst the majority of the world are fools." [Essay on Fevers.]

VIII. "It is true that medical practice has been perverted by fallacious reasoning, and by the misapplication of the powerful resources discovered by superior intelligence; and it has been sarcastically said that there is a wide difference between a good physician and a bad one, but, a small difference between a good physician and no physician at all,—by which it is meant to insinuate that the mischievous officiousness of art does commonly more than counterbalance any benefit derived from it."

The rest of this introductory section to Sir Gilbert Blane's "Medical Logic" is worth reading in this connexion. [Page 11, London Edition.]

Page 32. "Alas! it is not when we sleep soft and wake merrily ourselves, that we think on other people's sufferings. Our hearts are waxed light within us then, and we are for righting our ain wrangs and fighting our ain battles. But when the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body—and seldom may it visit your Leddyship—and when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low—lang and late may it be yours—O, my Leddy then it isna what we hae dune for ourselves, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly. And the thought that ye hae intervened to spare the pair thing's life will be sweeter in that hour, come when it may, than if a word of your mouth could hang the hail Porteous mob at the tail of ae tow."—*Heart of Mid-Lothian, Chapter XXXVII.*

Page 32. The strifes of our active early or middle life should not be prolonged into the period of our retirement or decline. There are few more melancholy spectacles presented in social life than that of old men contending with each other, and carrying the quarrels of their youth into the grave's mouth. Yet that was the case of Caspar Wistar and Benjamin Rush; and it may be of some others, almost, if not quite, as eminent. Coleridge well delineates, in a word-picture, such a group:

"Alas! They had been friends in youth:
But, whispering tongues can poison truth,
And constancy lives in realms above,
And life is thorny; and youth is vain:
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness on the brain.
* * * * *
Each spoke words of high disdain,
And insult to his heart's dear brother;
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining:—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs that had been rent asunder;
But, neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been."—*Christabel.*

Pages 1 & 32. "Beneath us, in a little aisle, (which hath not been opened since these thin grey locks were thick and brown,) there lies the first man whom I can name as memorable among those of this mighty line. It is he whom the Thane of Athol pointed out to the King of Scotland as SHOL-TO DHU-GLAS, or 'the dark iron-colored man,'—whose exertions had gained the battle for his native prince."—*Castle Dangerous, Chapter IX.*

This Secret Society, called the KAPPA LAMBDA, with additional members, is still in active operation in the City of New-York, and continues to make the effort to control the Medical Institutions, and has become bold enough by its success, to send in 1858 a delegate to the National Medical Association at Washington City.

REPORT.

The committee appointed to investigate the subject of the existence of a secret association of medical men in the city of New-York, said to be for purposes derogatory to the profession, and injurious to the public, Report:

That in undertaking the task assigned them, by the authority of the Medical Society, they supposed it not improbable, that they would be subjected, to the secret enmity of some who might consider their interests affected by an investigation of the subject of this report. They were not prepared however for gross and unprovoked insult, from any member of the secret association. They confess their mistake, and acknowledge that although moderate in their calculation, they had attributed too much to the prudence and sense of decorum of certain of the profession.

The committee have examined the subject committed to their investigation with caution and deliberation. Whilst under the influence of a desire to protect from unjust obloquy, they have been actuated by a paramount sense of duty to the Medical Society and the profession, to state truth derived from authentic sources of information, and to express opinions deemed fairly inferible from sure premises.

It is to be understood that an association of medical practitioners was formed in this city about *twelve* years ago. Who may be strictly called the founders of it we have been unable to learn.

The number of the original members was but small; Doctors Thomas Cock, Alexander H. Stevens, John C. Cheesman and some others belonged to it at an early date. New members have since been carefully selected, and gradually introduced, according as they were found to be suitable in any way to promote the objects of the association. The following physicians are now members, viz: Doctors *Thomas Cock, Alexander H. Stevens, John C. Cheesman, Francis U. Johnson, Stephen Brown, Ansel W. Ives, D. Atkins, Benjamin McVicker, Josiah D. Harris, Peter C. Tappan, John K. Rodgers, Martyn Paine, M. Willet, J. L. Phelps, Stephen Hasbrouck, John Conger, S. W. Moore, J. W. Weed, A. Smith, G. Smith, J. M. Smith, D. W. Kissam, R. K. Hoffman, J. C. Bliss, N. H. Dering, John Torrey.* There are a few more whose names were not suggested to the memory of our informant, one of the members of the association.

Another member of the society has insisted very strongly upon the circumstance that the institution is not "*called* Secret Association, but *Kappa Lambda*, a branch of the Parent Society." The committee do not know whether there is any cabalistic meaning in this designation. If any gentleman shall feel curious on this part of the subject, we can only inform them, that it is composed of two letters of the Greek Alphabet, answering to *k*, and *l*, in English, and for further instruction, refer them to those members of the Association who have been sufficiently educated to know their name, and to explain its import. With "*Parent Society*," or any other Societies external of New-York—the plan upon which they may be conducted—the characters of their members—the principles upon which they are founded—or the abuses that have grown out of them, we claim no right to interfere. The independent establishment in New-York is amenable to the Medical Society of the city and county, and to it alone the committee will confine its attention.

The avowed objects of this Association are the promotion of good fellowship among the members, and

the advancement of medical science. The first may be readily allowed, and the means used for securing it be lauded for ingenuity and aptness. Indeed never has the physiological fact of the existence of a close sympathy between the heart and stomach, been more experimentally proved. With regard to the second object, we remark that it cannot be so readily admitted. The members, when questioned on this particular, have hesitated, and have not given direct answers. —Moreover, besides that the evidence in its favor is deficient, your committee cannot be so uncharitable, or so unjust to the literary character of the gentlemen, as to suppose it possible that after having combined their wit for twelve years, at this day when the inquiry is made: What have you done, as an Association for the cause of science, and the honor of the profession? Echo alone should be heard to answer—*What?*

Among other regulations of this association there exist the following prominent requirements, viz: *Secrecy* and *Exclusiveness*. The former extending to the fact of the existence of the Institution and to its proceedings; whilst the latter is carried so far as to exclude any candidate proposed who does not receive a unanimous vote, said vote being taken by ballot. Here it is evident that the honor of every medical gentleman in the city is deeply concerned. If the persons composing this secret body repose confidence in the integrity and judgment of each other, then every man who may be proposed as a candidate, either with or without his consent, may have his reputation marred in the opinion of the whole fraternity,—his rejection implying that something discreditable is known of him, by one or more of the members of the association. The committee have been informed by the best authority, that *fancy* alone regulates the choice. No explanation is called for, or assigned, for black-balling a candidate.

Although it would seem from their own account, that the persons composing this association are not bound by oaths to aid each other in their professional pursuits, yet it doth appear that the same purpose is answered by a combination based upon the principles that have been mentioned, and is fully secured by the following solemn pledge, which is acknowledged as part of their compact.

"I do solemnly promise, that by all proper means, I will *promote the professional respectability and welfare of the members* of this association, and *vindicate their characters* when unjustly assailed, and that I will not demand any pecuniary acknowledgement for such instruction as it may be convenient for me to afford to the *son* of any indigent *member*, as may be in the opinion of the society qualified by his previous education and talents and moral character, to become a respectable and useful member of the profession, but that I will *afford such instruction gratuitously, in conjunction with the members of the society.*"

We have thus an acknowledgment on the part of the association, that its members are obligated to promote the professional respectability and welfare—to vindicate the character and provide for the medical education of the posterity of each other. It is here to be remembered that the above extract is taken from an *ex-parte* communication that was attempted to be introduced at the anniversary meeting of the medical society, but which was very properly rejected—ample opportunity having been afforded to make explanations, before the appointment of the committee of investigation.

This had never been attempted by the members of the association, although the professional and private character of many of them had been assailed in a periodical publication called the *Lancet*, which terminated in a libel suit, brought by two physicians who had been wrongfully accused of belonging to a secret association of a dishonorable character, but which the other gentlemen named in said publication have never publicly noticed. It became therefore necessary that the medical society, the organ of the profession, and the guardian of its honor and interests, should investigate this matter.

The committee cannot inform the society, whether the communication, above alluded to contains the *truth or the whole truth*. Composed as it is of a quantity of useless and irrelevant matter that could not have been introduced for any other purpose than to blind and mislead, the pledge that has been extracted is the only portion of it which is peculiar to the association as a distinct body, and is sufficient to show the insidious character of the institution. This quality, whilst it increases the injurious influence upon the interests of the profession, renders the liabilities of the members of the association, upon exposure, less important and dangerous to them than if they were bound by unlawful oaths to accomplish the same designs.

Your committee would observe that they respect some of the gentlemen belonging to the secret society, and can only account for the circumstance of their connection with it, by the fact that their unsuspecting integrity has led them to confide too implicitly in the avowal of their more artful associates, or has blinded them as to the natural tendencies of an association like that under consideration. Yet it must be admitted that there are men of *policy* belonging to it, whose minds are not of so high an order as to overlook the monopolizing effects of their arrangements, and whose morals are not so high-toned as to prevent them from using a machinery of the kind, to the disadvantage of their professional brethren and their own personal aggrandizement. And we would here remark that this association is devoid of any quality, redeeming it from the opprobrium that has been attached to secret societies.

The Masonic Institution, venerable for its antiquity, whose foundation is laid in a *sublime and universal charity* recognizing as brethren all classes, religious and conditions of men—extending to them the right hand of fellowship, and aiding and comforting them in their necessities, distresses and extremities—even this society has met with opposition, because in order to accomplish a *great good*, it has been under the necessity of adopting a requirement, considered by some an imperfection of the system, and rendering it obnoxious to public censure. What then must every intelligent and generous-minded man think of an association for which no such ennobling apology can be made; but which adding the odious feature of exclusiveness, to the suspicious characteristic of secrecy, offers nothing satisfactory in extenuation, and for which no spirit of allowance can offer any other explanation than this, viz.:—That it originated in *selfishness*, and has been continued for the purpose of advancing the pecuniary interests of, and making professional reputation for, its members—without submitting to fair and open competition, which decided talents and honorable minds never wish to avoid.

As your Committee has thus candidly expressed an opinion on the subject, it will be proper to enter more into detail, and to show how it has arrived at its conclusions; and they would commence by stating that no other explanations are in accordance with the modes of this Association. It is true, that since the discovery of its existence an attempt has been made by persons implicated, to represent it as solely devoted to professional improvement and as a club of individuals associated for the encouragement of the amiable feelings of our nature, to be secured by intimacy. But it is impossible for a mind of ordinary perception, at all acquainted with the world, and accustomed to reflection, to be satisfied with an explanation so deficient and inadequate. Were the objects such as have been alleged, why have gentlemen been excluded, whose known reputation for practical skill and scientific research, was a sufficient guarantee to the members of the club that, by a communion with them, they might have acquired useful knowledge, and furthered their *honorable* design of improving the profession? And how has it happened that the Association has not called to its aid many physicians, much respected in this community for their gentlemanlike manners, their irreproachable and un-

suspected professional and private character, and who might have furnished a good example of religious and moral virtue, and materially contributed to the promotion of the other laudable, amiable and generous purpose? The Committee find these questions more difficult to answer, when they consider the difference in the ages, education, association, morals and manners of the persons composing the Secret Club.

It may perhaps be urged that, as its members are of one way of thinking on the subject of the present policy in relation to medical education, in order to continue its harmony, it could not admit gentlemen whose sentiments were not fully understood to be in accordance with the unanimous feeling of the Association. It is sufficient to reply, that several physicians, distinguished for their professional attainments and particularly remarkable for their devotion to that policy which has resulted in the establishment of the present system of medical education, and, moreover, whose active exertions and extensive influence, were greatly instrumental in accomplishing the present order of things, have not been deemed fit characters to be introduced into this *good society*. In endeavoring to account for this slight of these personal and political friends, your Committee cannot but conclude that the superior talents and independence of character which would have led these gentlemen to take rank according to their supportable pretensions, rendered their admission dangerous to the factitiously important, though intrinsically insignificant, power controlling the institution and dispensing its benefits.

Having thus attempted to solve the mystery of the formation of the secret and exclusive association, it remains to investigate its tendencies, and to point out the evils resulting to the profession and the public from its existence in the community; and these, the Committee consider of so grievous a character as to call for the animadversion of the Medical Society.

By its influence in curtailing a free intercourse with the profession at large, it produces in the minds of its members a false estimate of their own characters, and an erroneous impression of the characters of those who are initiated into their mysteries. This is not only a natural consequence, but may be directly effected by misrepresentations made at their meetings, by some evil-minded member whose mean spirit, (shielded by the security of secrecy,) does not hesitate to make statements unliable to disproof, and for which he is not responsible. An impression can thus be made on the minds of those present, which may remain ever afterwards unfavorable to the party thus basely slandered. The injurious effects thus produced are reciprocal. For when men of weak minds have been rendered vain and arrogant, unless they have great power of concealment, they are apt to carry out their feelings in an assuming and contemptuous behavior towards their equals and superiors. Now, with a body of men so skilled in human nature as the medical profession, and so much governed by common sense, we venture to assert that nothing renders a man more justly contemptible and entirely ridiculous. The disrespect thus engendered, and mutually felt, may be transferred from the profession to the public, and may finally eventuate in degrading the profession so low as almost to preclude the possibility of its ever regaining its pristine rank and respectability.

An association like the one under consideration, is also to be reprobated, inasmuch as it tends to an unjust monopoly of the emoluments and honors of the profession: The more advanced and powerful appropriating the consultations and wealthy practice, whilst to the juniors and less influential is granted that which is less lucrative, and to which the former cannot attend. Advantages like these can be easily secured by an association of men practicing an art which is a mystery to the public, without supposing them individually to be possessed of more than ordinary capacity. We observe that even instinct has taught certain animals, of comparative weakness and stupidity, the necessity of combination in warding off the attacks of the more powerful. Hence, by putting their heads together and keeping close and compact, they secure themselves against encroachment, and chew the cud in safety. There are others of a more offensive nature, who range in squads, and who sometimes succeed by a united attack in dragging down noble game. They are however particularly fond of a certain kind of flesh. To the profession, the Committee would give warning, by reminding them of the Spanish proverb: "If you make sheep of yourselves, the wolves will eat you up." But, to be more serious, your Committee do consider a combination of men so

well calculated to create a monopoly in the profession, as opposed to the spirit of the excellent code of medical ethics adopted by the Medical Society, and destructive to the etiquette, which in a refined community has ever governed the physician and gentleman.

An association of the magnitude of the club under consideration, by acting in concert, by accepting favors from other physicians, who act in good faith, and not reciprocating them, can collect a much larger portion of public patronage, and wield a much greater influence than they are justly entitled to by their real merit.

The extent of the effect produced in this way in the case before us, the profession alone can judge, and fully appreciate. The following fact, being palpable, is sufficient to produce the conviction that there is truth, and not mere suspicion, in what has been alleged. It is this—Almost all the professional offices in the city of New York, leading to practice and conferring reputation are monopolized by the Secret Association. For example: In the New-York Hospital, the attending physicians and surgeons are Drs. *Thos. Cock, John C. Cheesman, Francis U. Johnson, Alexander H. Stevens, John Kearney Rogers, Joseph M. Smith* and *Valentine Mott*. Dr. Mott was appointed a surgeon of the Hospital before the formation of the Secret Club, of which, we are happy to state, he is not a member. In the New York City Dispensary, we have, as consulting physicians, Drs. *John C. Cheesman, Francis U. Johnson, Alexander H. Stevens, S. W. Moore* and *John Augustine Smith*. This last gentleman, we have been told, was formerly a member of the Secret Association, but has lately retired from it. The physicians of the Lying-in Establishment are, with two exceptions, members of the New York Kappa Lambda. The following are their names: Drs. *Thomas Cock, Francis U. Johnson, Peter C. Tappan, J. C. Bliss, Ansel W. Ives, Benj. McVickar, Gilbert Smith, Hersey Baillies, G. Wilkes*. The last two are not members. One of the physicians of the Magdalen Asylum, (Stephen Brown,) is a member of the Secret Club. He has also, within a few years past, enjoyed the important situations of physician to the Alms House, and attending physician to the New York Hospital. In the Medical College in Barclay street, before the demise of the late President, at one time, the Secret Club had in possession four professorships and the presidency of the institution. Of the medical trustees two-thirds are members of the Secret Association.

It is but proper to remark that the offices of Resident Physician and Health Commissioner are not held by members of the Association. But it must be recollected that these institutions, *ceteris paribus*, are conferred upon those medical gentlemen who have political claims upon the dominant party of the State, which makes these appointments. The circumstance of the Association missing these offices is hence easily understood and explained.

The Committee are of opinion that the public good is very materially interfered with by the existence of secret, exclusive and mutual-benefit medical clubs in the community. Not to mention the useless consultations, and the unnecessary numbers invited to them, both of which effects the disposition of the members of these clubs to oblige and patronize each other, is calculated to produce, it may happen that the patients who fall into their hands, may be reduced to such an extremity as to render a consultation necessary. If your Committee understand the nature of a consultation, it is not intended to be merely the assembling together of men who see eye to eye, in order to avoid responsibility, and to increase the expenses of medical attendance, but would rather judge that their utility in reference to patients, mainly depends upon a free interchange of the opinions of men of skill and independent minds, who would not be so much impressed with a deference for each other, or their own interest, as to forget the most important concern, the patient's safety. Under other circumstances, a consultation is a mere farce, if nothing worse.

In cases requiring surgical operations, the evils of these Associations may be seriously felt. It often happens that gentlemen of the profession are asked to recommend a surgeon to decide upon the propriety of an operation, and to perform it, if necessary. When we learn that a gentleman of our city, celebrated at home and abroad, for his correct judgment in surgery—for

the boldness and safety of his operations—does not belong to the Secret Association of New York, how can we account for the circumstance, unless by supposing that he is either not properly appreciated by the members, or else that early at his distinguished reputation has excluded him? In either case, there is reason to fear that in those important cases requiring such a man, he may be set aside, and a man of rashness, or otherwise mentally or physically deficient, be substituted. Great damage might thus happen to such as depend upon the impartiality of a prejudiced or unconscientious medical adviser, for an unbiased recommendation.

Another evil likely to result from secret and exclusive Medical Associations is this: There are many circumstances of private life, with which physicians become acquainted, through the confidence reposed in them by the public, which should never be transferred from their own bosoms. There are also occurrences happening in the weakness of nature, and under the influence of disease, which men of delicacy of feeling, and a nice sense of honor, are in no danger of revealing, but which gross men are only deterred from communicating by their interest demanding their silence. In Secret Clubs, in moments of relaxation from more grave conversation, anecdotes may be related, the subjects of which would feel much aggrieved did they know that they afforded topics for the conversation, and perhaps amusement, of a number of medical men, met for the purpose of good-fellowship, and bound to keep secret whatever transpires among them.

In conclusion, your Committee, after having traced the natural tendencies of a secret and exclusive society of men, in a profession which is a mystery to the public, who can form no adequate idea upon what slight circumstances and false foundations, the characters often rest, would notice the circumstance that has been set forth as counteracting, in the present case, the evil tendencies above mentioned.

It has been asserted that the good moral and religious character of some of the persons belonging to the Association ought to be a sufficient guarantee to the rest of the profession, and should satisfy the public that they are too pure to act unjustly to their fellow practitioners, or to do them wrong. Your Committee unhesitatingly deny this assertion, as it is not in accordance with the fact, and reject the idea that the principles of those belonging to the club, are any better than those of the gentlemen excluded. Indeed, the vanity and pride that would make such distinctions in their own favor, and offer such an apology, is not indicative of good sense, or of Christian meekness and humility. Moreover, the Committee cannot manifest such ignorance of the human heart, and the history of mankind, as to confide in ostentatious professions of extreme excellence. One of the wisest of men complained that he had found but one man out of a thousand. Now, supposing physicians to be as good men as their neighbors, then, out of about three hundred medical gentlemen in New York, about thirty have been found, a number which, if added to those who may have been overlooked, is too large a proportion in favor of the increase of perfection, since the days of the great and wise king. The truth is this: Allowing some of these gentlemen to be, in general, good and clever men, yet we must not forget that human nature is weak—that there are such things as besetting sins, and that, in a trading community, covetousness is apt to be the most predominant. It is not only the duty of individuals to strive, as much as possible, against the absorbing influence of this passion; but it particularly becomes the duty of communities to prevent this debasing propensity of our nature, from interfering too much with their interests and the public good. Your Committee would therefore recommend to the Medical Society the publication of this report, in order to neutralize the effects of the Secret Association, by informing the public of its existence and tendencies. At the same time, they would recommend to the members of the profession, a close observation of the traits of character and the conduct of the members of the Secret Club, so that, if possible, we may distinguish the man who has been imposed upon, from him of mean and selfish views and artful character. The former, the Committee would advise to leave the Association as soon as possible. Of the latter, they would say to the profession: "*Hic niger est: hunc tu cave.*"

PHILIP E. MILLEDOLER, M. D.
FELIX PASCALIS, M. D.
ABRAHAM D. WILSON, M. D.
HANS B. GRAM, M. D.

Published by order of the Medical Society,

F. WINTHROP WALSH, M. D., Recording Secretary.

The Medical Society, consisting of three hundred physicians, almost unanimously approved this Report.

